

## Department of Veterans Affairs

## § 26.5

### § 26.2 Applicability and scope.

This part applies to VA, its administrations and staff offices.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370a)

[51 FR 37182, Oct. 20, 1986, as amended at 54 FR 34987, Aug. 23, 1989]

### § 26.3 Definitions.

(a) *United States* means all States, territories, and possessions of the United States and all waters and air space subject to the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. The territories and possessions of the United States include the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

(b) *VA elements*, for the purposes of this part, means the Veterans Health Services and Research Administration (VHS&RA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the National Cemetery System (NCS), and the Office of Facilities.

(c) Other terms used in this part are defined in CEQ Regulations, 40 CFR part 1508.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370a)

[51 FR 37182, Oct. 20, 1986, as amended at 54 FR 34987, Aug. 23, 1989]

### § 26.4 Policy.

(a) VA must act with care in carrying out its mission of providing services for veterans to ensure it does so consistently with national environmental policies. Specifically, VA shall ensure that all practical means and measures are used to protect, restore, and enhance the quality of the human environment; to avoid or minimize adverse environmental consequences, consistently with other national policy considerations; and to attain the following objectives:

(1) Achieve the fullest possible use of the environment, without degradation, or undesirable and unintended consequences;

(2) Preserve historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, while maintaining, where possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety and individual choice;

(3) Achieve a balance between the use and development of resources, within

the sustained capacity of the ecological system involved; and,

(4) Enhance the quality of renewable resources while working toward the maximum attainable recycling of non-renewable resources.

(b) VA elements shall:

(1) Interpret and administer the policies, regulations, and public laws of the United States in accordance with the policies set forth in the NEPA and CEQ Regulations;

(2) Prepare concise and clear environmental documents which shall be supported by documented environmental analyses;

(3) Integrate the requirements of NEPA with Department planning and decision-making procedures;

(4) Encourage and facilitate involvement by affected agencies, organizations, interest groups and the public in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment; and,

(5) Consider alternatives to the proposed actions which are encompassed by the range of alternatives discussed in relevant environmental documents, and described in the environmental impact statement.

(Authority: 42 U.S.C. 4321-4370a)

[51 FR 37182, Oct. 20, 1986, as amended at 54 FR 34987, Aug. 23, 1989]

### § 26.5 Responsibilities.

(a) The Director of the Office of Environmental Affairs shall:

(1) Be responsible to coordinate and provide guidance to VA elements on all environmental matters;

(2) Assist in the preparation of environmental documents by VA elements; and, where more than one VA element, or Federal, State, or local agency is involved, assign the lead VA element or propose the lead Federal, State or local agency to prepare the environmental documents;

(3) Recommend appropriate actions to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on those environmental matters for which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has final approval authority;

(4) Assist in resolution of disputes concerning environmental matters within VA, and among VA and other Federal, State and local agencies;